

NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE
VIRGINIA CONSERVATION PRACTICE STANDARD

LAND SMOOTHING

(Acre)

CODE 466

DEFINITION

Removing irregularities on the land surface by use of special equipment.

SCOPE

This practice applies to operations classed as rough grading. Ordinarily, this does not require a complete grid survey.

PURPOSE

Improve surface drainage, provide for more effective use of precipitation, obtain more uniform planting depths, provide for more uniform cultivation, improve equipment operation and efficiency, improve terrace alignment, and facilitate contour cultivation.

CONDITIONS WHERE PRACTICE APPLIES

This practice applies on areas where depressions, mounds, old terraces, turn rows, and other surface irregularities interfere with the application of needed soil and water conservation and management practices.

It is limited to areas having adequate soil depth or where topsoil can be salvaged and replaced.

DESIGN CRITERIA

The extent of rough grading required and tolerances of the finished smoothing job shall be in keeping with the requirements of the planned cropping system.

CONSIDERATIONS

- The effects of land smoothing on the water budget, especially on volumes and rates of runoff, infiltration, and evaporation should be considered.
- Potential for changes in plant growth and transpiration because of changes in the volume of soil water should be considered.
- Consideration should be given to the effects of land smoothing on erosion and the movement of sediment and soluble and sediment-attached substances carried by runoff.
- Effects on the use and management of nutrients and pesticides should be evaluated.
- Consider the effects on downstream water quality.
- Potential for earth moving to uncover or redistribute toxic materials, such as saline soils should be assessed.

Conservation practice standards are reviewed periodically, and updated if needed. To obtain the current version of this standard, contact the Natural Resources Conservation Service.

- Effects on the visual quality of downstream water resources should be considered.

PLANS AND SPECIFICATIONS

Plans and specifications for land smoothing shall be in keeping with this standard and shall describe the requirements for applying the practice to achieve its intended purpose.

LAND SMOOTHING SPECIFICATIONS

Construction operations shall be carried out in such a manner that erosion and air and water pollution are minimized and held within legal limits.

The land to be smoothed shall be cleared of vegetative matter and trash.

Irregularities shall be smoothed to the degree required for the planned use and the requirements of subsequent tillage, floating, or planning to be performed.

Where possible, the ground surface should be plowed or disked prior to smoothing.

OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE

The land shall be farmed in such a way as to maintain the smooth surface.

REFERENCES

1. Engineering Field Handbook.

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Approved Practice Narrative
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466 D1 Land Smoothing: Remove irregularities on the land surface that interfere with the application of planned conservation practices.

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